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CONSTRUCTECH

August 29, 2006

Technology Day Provides Education

Technology leaders from across the construction industry converged in Arlington Heights, Ill., on August 23 to discuss the latest trends in adopting and using IT (information technology).

Contractors from across the country came to hear unique presentations on the latest trends in project management, collaboration, and integration, among other topics. Comprised of seven half-hour sessions, Technology Day featured a wide range of technology leaders from across the industry detailing their strategies for tackling these initiatives.

Craig DiGirogi, project management and accounting system manager with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts/DCAM, for example, addressed strategies for getting subcontractors on board with using IT—a topic at the forefront for many in the industry.

He stressed the importance of adopting technology tools that fit the needs of all parties involved on a project. As a public owner organization, DCAM embraces this strategy, using technology that is a fit for all general contractors and subcontractors involved, as well as providing training to its partners as needed.

Sticking with the topic of training, Jim Kissane a fellow with elearning technology provider RedVector.com, www.redvector.com, Tampa, Fla., outlined the benefits of developing an elearning strategy during his session. Unlike a typical presentation, Kissane believes Technology Day provided a unique forum to relate the benefits of technology in an interactive manner.

Says Kissane, "Technology Day was an excellent opportunity to listen to and network with the leaders and innovators in construction who have made the investment in their companies to achieve a sustainable business advantage.

The structure and format of Technology Day provided a rare opportunity for me to engage, in a highly productive way, the individual contractor companies and their respective enabling vendors on the "real world" issues and challenges they confronted, and how they overcame them to realize success."



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The day concluded with an open panel discussion on the current state of IT and the impact it will have on the industry in the years ahead. 'Strategies for Technology Success' featured Tom Garrett, CIO (chief information officer) with Brasfield & Gorrie, www.brasfieldgorrie.com, Birmingham, Ala., Andy Burg, executive operations technology services, with Messer Construction, www.messer.com, Cincinnati, Ohio, Alan Stone, CIO with Berks Homes, www.berkshomes.com, Mohnton, Pa., and Eric Rose, managing partner with E.M. Rose Building Co., www.emrose.net, Branford, Conn.

These professionals shared their thoughts on the benefits of integration, common misperceptions associated with IT, the technology requirements the expect of subcontractors and suppliers, and the biggest issues facing the adoption of technology in the market going forward.

"I found Constructech Technology Day to be inspirational with the sharing of successes and challenges by contractors, consultants, retailers, and suppliers in their efforts to implement new technology and improve their business," says Mike Kramer, director of construction and facilities with Wild Oats Markets, www.wildoats.com, Boulder, Colo.

Kramer was among three on a panel that discussed the impact Web-based project management has on collaboration efforts during construction.

"I left the conference with new ideas and a renewed commitment to push the technology of online project management to new limits."